

In re: Ekwuribe et al.
Serial No.: 09/873,757
Filed: June 4, 2001
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Remarks

Applicants appreciate the thorough examination of the present application as evidenced by the final Office Action dated October 14, 2003 (hereinafter, "the Final Action"). Applicants further appreciate the opportunity afforded to Applicants' representative, Shawna Cannon Lemon, to discuss the pending claims with the Examiner on March 29, 2004 and April 6, 2004.

Claims 1-8, 10-19, 21-44, 46-49 and 51-102 were pending in the present application at the time of the Final Action. Claims 1-8, 10-19, 21-44, 46-49, 51-67, 70, 71, 75, 76, 80, 81, 86-92, 95, 96, 100 and 101 were rejected in the Final Action. Claims 68, 69, 72-74, 77-79, 82-85, 93, 94, 97-99 and 102 have been objected to in the Final Action. Applicants previously submitted an Amendment on January 13, 2004 responsive to the Final Action (hereinafter, "January 13, 2004 Amendment"). Entry of the January 13, 2004 Amendment canceled claims 1-8, 10-19, 21-44, 46-49 and 51-102, without prejudice, and added new claims 103-122. Claims 103-122 are now denoted herein as "Previously Presented." In view of discussions with the Examiner on March 29, 2004 and April 6, 2004, Applicants add new claims 123-133 herein. Support for these new claims is found in the language of the original claims and currently pending claims, as well as throughout the specification. Consequently, no new matter is added by the addition of these new claims and their entry and allowance are respectfully requested.

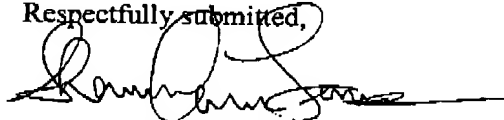
Conclusion

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, entry of these new claims and allowance of the pending claims to issue. The Examiner is invited and encouraged to contact the undersigned directly if such contact will expedite the prosecution of the pending claims to issue. In any event, any questions that the Examiner may have should be directed to the undersigned, who may be reached at (919) 854-1400.

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It is not believed that an extension of time and/or additional fee(s)-including fees for net addition of claims-are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. In the event, however, that additional fees are required, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0220.

Respectfully submitted,

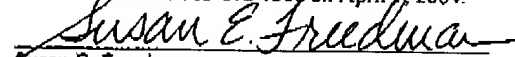


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CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION UNDER 37 CFR 1.8

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office via facsimile number 703-872-9306 on April 7, 2004.



Susan E. Freedman

Date of Signature: April 7, 2004